

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 1 1. A method for aligning transactional flows within an internet exchange portal,
2 comprising the steps of:
3 facilitating an auction on the portal between a buyer and a seller;
4 receiving an auction bid from the buyer;
5 soliciting financing from a financing company in response to the auction bid; and
6 soliciting shipping services from shippers in response to the auction bid.
- 1 2. The method of claim 1 wherein the soliciting financing step includes the step of:
2 soliciting flooring from a flooring company in response to the auction bid.
- 1 3. The method of claim 2 further including the steps of:
2 soliciting financing from additional financing companies in response to the auction
3 bid;
4 providing the buyer with a set of flooring credit lines from the financing
5 companies; and
6 selecting a flooring credit line from the set in response to a signal from the buyer.
- 1 4. A method for aligning transactional flows within an internet exchange portal,
2 comprising the steps of:
3 facilitating an auction on the portal between a buyer and a seller;
4 collecting a set of shipping data for a contract entered into between the buyer and
5 seller resulting from the auction;
6 soliciting bids for shipping services required by the contract;

7 receiving a set of shipping bids; and
8 selecting a bid from the set of bids according to a predetermined set of bid
9 evaluation criteria.

1 5. The method of claim 4 wherein the facilitating step of includes the step of:
2 facilitating a business-to-business auction on the portal.

1 6. The method of claim 4:
2 wherein the collecting step includes the step of collecting a contract consummation
3 event; and
4 further comprising the step of billing an auction services fee upon occurrence of
5 the event.

1 7. The method of claim 4 wherein:
2 the collecting step includes the step of collecting a bidding-period; and
3 the receiving step further comprising the step of receiving a set of shipping bids
4 within the bidding-period.

1 8. The method of claim 4:
2 wherein the shipping data is organized into a set of shipping fields;
3 wherein the collecting step includes the step of collecting additional sets of
4 shipping data corresponding to additional contracts;
5 further comprising the step of grouping together those contracts having equivalent
6 shipping data within at least one of the shipping fields; and

1 15. A method for transactional flows within an internet exchange portal, comprising
2 the steps of:
3 soliciting unused capacity for providing shipping services to buyers and sellers who
4 participate in auctions facilitated by the portal from shippers; and
5 receiving a set of bids from the buyers and sellers for the unused capacity.

1 16. A computer-usable medium embodying computer program code for causing a
2 computer to align transactional flows within an internet exchange portal, comprising the
3 steps of:
4 facilitating an auction on the portal between a buyer and a seller;
5 collecting a set of shipping data for a contract entered into between the buyer and
6 seller resulting from the auction;
7 soliciting bids for shipping services required by the contract;
8 receiving a set of shipping bids; and
9 selecting a bid from the set of bids according to a predetermined set of bid
10 evaluation criteria.

1 17. The computer-usable medium of claim 16 wherein the facilitating step of includes
2 the step of:
3 facilitating a business-to-business auction on the portal.

1 18. The computer-usable medium of claim 16:

2 wherein the collecting step includes the step of collecting a contract consummation
3 event; and
4 further comprising the step of billing an auction services fee upon occurrence of
5 the event.

1 19. The computer-usable medium of claim 16 wherein:
2 the collecting step includes the step of collecting a bidding-period; and
3 the receiving step further comprising the step of receiving a set of shipping bids
4 within the bidding-period.

1 20. The computer-usable medium of claim 16:
2 wherein the shipping data is organized into a set of shipping fields;
3 wherein the collecting step includes the step of collecting additional sets of
4 shipping data corresponding to additional contracts;
5 further comprising the step of grouping together those contracts having equivalent
6 shipping data within at least one of the shipping fields; and
7 wherein the soliciting step includes the step of soliciting bids for providing
8 shipping services for the group of contracts.

1 21. The computer-usable medium of claim 16 wherein the soliciting step of includes
2 the step of:
3 soliciting bids for shipping services from a plurality of shippers and shipping
4 brokers.

1 22. The computer-usable medium of claim 16 wherein the soliciting step of includes
 2 the step of:
 3 displaying a predetermined set of shipping data on an internet exchange portal
 4 website accessible to shippers and shipping brokers.

1 23. The computer-usable medium of claim 16 wherein the facilitating step of includes
 2 the step of:
 3 collecting the predetermined set of bid evaluation criteria from the seller.

1 24. The computer-usable medium of claim 16 wherein the selecting step of includes
 2 the steps of:
 3 forwarding the bids onto the seller; and
 4 receiving a bid selection from the seller.

1 25. The computer-usable medium of claim 16 wherein the selecting step of includes
 2 the steps of:
 3 selecting a bid with a lowest shipping price.

1 26. The computer-usable medium of claim 16 wherein the selecting step of includes
 2 the steps of:
 3 selecting a default shipper if none of the bids conform to the predetermined set of
 4 bid evaluation criteria.

27. A computer-usable medium embodying computer program code for causing a computer to align transactional flows within an internet exchange portal, comprising the steps of:
- soliciting unused capacity for providing shipping services to buyers and sellers who participate in auctions facilitated by the portal from shippers; and
 - receiving a set of bids from the buyers and sellers for the unused capacity.